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AIRGRAM

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A 280

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State
 INFO : USCINCSO FOR POLAD, Amembassy ANAGUA, SAN JOSE, SAN
 SALVADOR, TEGUCIGALPA

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

SUBJECT: Weekly Internal Security Report: 1/26-2/1/68

REF :

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 DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 8 24 AM 1968
 RS/AN
 ANALYSIS BRANCH

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DATE: Feb 3, 68

1. The most important incident of the week was the explosion of four bombs in the heart of the downtown area of the capital on February 1. Two persons were killed and about a dozen wounded. (See enclosure for details) The incident is significant because the apparent target for 2 of the bombs, those in the American Donut Shop and the Hawaii Restaurant, was the general citizenry picked with no apparent pattern. In the past it has not been unusual for innocent bystanders to be wounded or killed but they have not previously been the apparent primary targets.

2. Details as to who is responsible and why are still lacking, but judging from the fact that the explosions were all so close together in both time and space and that the targets were ones that would insure widespread publicity for the acts (front page headlines and pictures all papers), it is reasonable to conclude the creation of instability was the prime objective. The most likely authors of the act are elements of the PGT/FAR. The February 2 afternoon press quotes police chief SOSA Avila as saying that the 2 persons killed in the attacks as well as some of the wounded were high school students who had in fact exploded the bombs and who were working for the FAR. Sosa went on to say that a search of the house of Carlos Cacéres Ruiz, a member of the gang who was wounded in the action, produced a number of documents implicating him with the rebels.

3. What the bombings mean and what effect they will have on the political climate is hard to judge. It is always possible that they represent a new tactic which the rebels plan to pursue; however they could equally well be an isolated incident, perhaps carried out by one militant rebel sub-group.

Enclosure - List of Incidents

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Contents and Classification Approved by

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Drafted by:

POL:WNewlin:2/2/68

Clearances:

POL-1:JWilson (in draft)

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Guatemala A-280
Enclosure

LIST OF INCIDENTS

- Jan. 25 - Nine members of dangerous band that has been terrorizing south coast captured by Army in Nueva Concepcion, Escuintla according to press. They were accused with a number of recent violent crimes in the area.
- Jan. 27 - Fifteen machinegun-armed men kidnapped and killed a Comisionado Militar and his employee in Nueva Concepcion, Dept. Escuintla. The victims were identified as Manuel de Jesús Díaz and José Luis Salazar.
- Jan. 28 - Bus driver taken from his capital house by 8 armed men according to his wife. He was identified as José Francisco Navarro Flores.
- Jan. 28 - Bodies of Gabino Lima Jiménez and Cleofas Castillo Gonzalez found shot at Altupe, Dept. Jalapa.
- O/A Jan 28 - Body of unidentified man found shot in Pujujil, Dept. Solola.
- O/A Jan 28 - Body of Cornelio Hernández found shot in Quezada, Dept. Jutiapa. He had been recently kidnapped from his home by unidentified men.
- O/A Jan. 28 - Bodies of Jose Luis Salazar Camey and Jesus Díaz found shot in Nueva Concepcion, Dept. Escuintla.
- Jan. 29 - Six unexploded bombs found in various locations in the capital. There was some speculation that they were placed somewhat indiscriminately and hurriedly by persons who wanted to get rid of them quickly so as not to be caught with them in one of the widespread house-to-house searches.
- Jan. 30 - Armed band raids finca Santa Margarita, Dept. San Marcos.
- Jan. 31 - Body of Benedicto Alarcon Alvarado found shot up in El Amatillo, Dept. Chiquimula. He had been reported kidnapped from his home in Ipala January 28.
- Jan. 31 - Bullet-riddled bodies of Hermenegildo Reyes Sazo and Patricio Enrique Martinez Carias in Santa Maria de Jesus, Dept. Sacatepequez.
- Feb. 1 - Four bombs exploded within radius of a few blocks in central Zone 1 of capital between 1600 and 1700 hours: 1) bomb in courtyard National Palace did little damage; 2) bomb in car in front of Army Literacy Center injured 2 persons including a 2 year old child; 3) bomb at American Donut Shop killed the young woman who was carrying it and wounded at least 5 others; 4) bomb at Hawaii Restaurant killed one person and wounded at least 6 others.

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Guatemala A-230

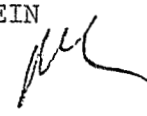
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4. At present the public reaction has been moderate. While the bombings are now the lead topic of almost any conversation, memories are short and if they were not followed up by similar incidents, their impact would not be great.

5. One byproduct of the bombings will probably be to reinforce popular support of the security force's efforts to track down the terrorists. The most visible of these efforts has been an increase in the roadblocks and car searches and most recently numerous house-to-house searches. (Several houses of mission members have been searched to date.) What is somewhat interesting is that while in the past such measures have often raised a cry of protest from the population, in the recent series of searches there has been a minimum of complaining. One contributing factor may be that according to reports the searchers have conducted themselves professionally and courteously, which has not always been the case.

6. Other incidents were not very numerous. There were 9 assassination victims located, and two assassinations, and a few other miscellaneous incidents. (See enclosure for details)

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